

**U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER  
PROTECTION  
OFFICE OF BORDER PATROL  
(b) (7)(E)**

**Operations Order**

**Dates of Operation:** 09/30/2010 thru 10/31/2010

**Operations Order:** Operation Huckleberry "FRAGO"

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**I. SITUATION**

**A. General Situation**

- Operation Huckleberry is a Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) to previously approved Operation Martillo-

Law enforcement agencies throughout the Tucson Sector AOR are seeing an increase in incidents related to bandit activity or "RIP Crews" and armed Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO) which has raised the threat level in many areas to law enforcement agencies, local residents and illegal aliens. Bandit groups typically target backpacked drug loads and at times rob illegal alien groups. Another concern is that the bandit activity is extremely organized and related to; threats and assaults on officers; home invasions; hostage and kidnapping cases; homicides; and the increase of armed backpack loads by DTOs. There have been numerous incidents of violence to include shooting incidents in the past few years in the Tucson Sector AOR.

Tucson Border Patrol Sector Intelligence Reports indicate increased bandit and armed DTO activity in the canyons of the (b) (7)(E) and the (b) (7)(E) areas. Tucson Border Patrol Sector FIR's have confirmed the regular presence of armed individuals/groups that are employed to safeguard drug loads as well as active presence of bandits in these areas. These reports have also been confirmed by electronic surveillance. Despite LEO's increased operational effectiveness, many bandit smuggling organizations remain committed to operating in the zones (b) (7)(E) within the Tucson Sector AOR. This organization (or organizations) shift operations within this corridor to avoid detection and enforcement efforts.

In 2008, what is believed to be the same bandit organization operated in areas just west of the (b) (7)(E) in (b) (7)(E) and the (b) (7)(E). Since November 2009 the bandit activity and armed DTO activity has increased in zones (b) (7)(E). There have been several incidents and reports of violence (reported as bandit activity) in the (b) (7)(E) and (b) (7)(E) areas shifting from (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E). Since November of 2009, one Border Patrol Agent was shot in (b) (7)(E) Canyon and several illegal aliens suffered gunshot wounds in this area. This expanded corridor has seen numerous acts of violence at an increasing rate.

On 08/28/10 (b) (7)(E) intelligence collection efforts in the targeted area obtained photographs of (b) (7)(E) bandits armed with AK-47s which finally identified a pattern of travel and hours of operation of the bandit group. Knowing the tendency of this group to shift locations of RIP operations constantly, (b) (7)(E) developed a hasty plan to interdict this group at the current known target location.

(b) (7)(E) has been gathering intelligence on this area tracking bandit incidents, shootings, (b) (7)(E) reports of bandit activity and armed narcotics loads to include logging bandit caches and marking (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) Operation Huckleberry will be a collaborative effort between (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) (SOG) (b) (7)(E) attachments) and (b) (7)(E) station to increase the number of (b) (7)(E) operators available to combat the high-risk situations within this area, based on threat and intelligence. Initially, Operation Huckleberry will concentrate tactical efforts from (b) (7)(E) to (b) (7)(E) due to recent intelligence of bandit activity within this concentrated area. The objective of this operation is to interdict the bandits operating in the area. The goal of the operation is to identify and dismantle the organization responsible for the bandit activity and RIPS within the (b) (7)(E) AOR.

## **B. Terrain and Weather:**

### **1. General Target AO Description:**

The Target Area is bordered on the (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E), on the (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E), on the (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) and on the (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E). This general area is rocky and mountainous with brushy low ground and open high ground. The area is channelized through deep canyons, steep bluffs and some rolling hills. (b) (7)(E) is predominately scrub oak, cacti, catclaw, and cholla and some ground cover in low areas. Most of the (b) (7)(E) is remote and difficult to access by vehicle with little tactical infrastructure. There is no easy access to the area and most access is along the periphery.

### **2. Ingress / Egress Routes:**

Determined based on mission specificity. Most of the (b) (7)(E) is difficult to access by vehicle and offers limited LZ/PZ's. (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) Road infrastructure is limited in quantity and quality.

### **3. Environmental Concerns:**

Agents assigned to conduct operations in these remote location must be aware of the rugged nature of the terrain. The area is mostly rocky with scattered brush and is formed primarily of rolling hills, deep canyons and steep bluffs with little infrastructure. Due to the remote and rugged terrain, (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) Most of the terrain is subject to flash floods during this monsoon season, extreme temperatures and very little standing water, increasing the challenges for extended lay-ins.

### **4. Weather and Light Data:**

Weather and light data will be available from the (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) during operation. Extreme inclement weather conditions such as extreme heat and cold and summer monsoon should be expected during the operation.

## **C. Criminal Element Information:**

### **1. What is the criminal activity related to?**

(b) (7)(E)

### **2. Identification of and synopsis of criminal activities:**

Specific organizations are unknown, however most of the incidents are reported as armed encounters with bandits. In general these organizations increasingly use counter-measures to avoid law enforcement detection. Much of this is done through the use of scanners, hand-held radios, extensive scouting and, in some instances, cover and concealment tactics normally associated with military units. Increased law enforcement presence and improvements in technology are forcing smugglers and bandit groups to constantly shift locations, change their tactics and techniques to sustain successful operations. It is suspected that the bandit groups are part of an organization that has been conducting RIPS in the (b) (7)(E) for years. The organization seems to know when and where the (b) (7)(E) will move.

In 2007, bandit group operated in target area. (b) (7)(E) apprehended several bandits to include two shooting incidents thus shifting the bandits west.

In 2008, bandit group operated west of the target area just west of (b) (7)(E). Several bandits were apprehended shifting the group back to the east.

In 2009 and 2010, the bandit group has been operating in a large area from the (b) (7)(E) area to the (b) (7)(E) to include the (b) (7)(E) area and the (b) (7)(E) area. Most recently there has been intelligence gathered to a concentrated area from (b) (7)(E) to (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E)

Local bandits have generally operate in a (b) (7)(E) element with most members armed with long arms. Bandits typically focus on smuggling trail choke points and utilize rarely traveled high points as hide-sites and staging points. Bandit hide-sites are generally within a mile of a road. Bandits groups are believed to ingress to their target locations on the United States side of the border by vehicle insertion near target area on roads such as (b) (7)(E) and the numerous ranch roads accessed from the (b) (7)(E). It is believed that the bandit groups remain in position for several days without resupply but will receive on call resupply when needed.

- Bandit group is more active during hunting season
- Nov. 2009 to Feb. 2010 conducted RIPS on weekends but not within a concentrated area. Most recent activity is sporadic.
- Bandit group seems to be inactive in periods of low illumination.

+ (b) (7)(E) expects bandit activity to shift eventually from the current concentrated area

☐ Unknown

### 3. Locations:

(b) (7)(E) is currently developing (b) (7)(E) in the (b) (7)(E) AO through reconnaissance/surveillance missions and special intelligence.

### 4. Capabilities

Bandits are armed, usually with long-arms and have shown the willingness to engage law enforcement. They utilize basic field craft techniques for hide sites, movement and contact with alien/narcotics groups. They utilize binos, radios and cell phones. Some exhibit behavior consistent with the use of night optics. Both scouts and bandits will operated in the AO for several days at a time.

### 5. Most Dangerous Course of Action (MDCOA):

Bandits engage Agents in a coordinated effort while owning key terrain with a tactical advantage. See (b) (7)(E) SOP for Actions on Objective

### 6. Most Likely Course of Action (MLCOA):

Attempt to Evade Apprehension

## II. MISSION:

(b) (7)(E) (with SOG (b) (7)(E) attachments) in coordination with (b) (7)(E) Station and Sector (b) (7)(E) will conduct a special reconnaissance/interdiction operation targeting the bandit activity operating in the (b) (7)(E) (b) (7)(E) area starting 09 SEPT 2010 in order to identify and dismantle the organization conducting the bandit RIPS.

### III. EXECUTION

#### A. Chief's Intent:

It is the Chief Patrol Agent's intent to prevent illegal Trans-National Incursions of any type and all Trans-National Threats into the United States of America.

It is the Tucson Sector Chief's intent to apprehend terrorists and terrorist weapons and to prevent the illegal trafficking of humans and narcotics into the interior of the United States through the Tucson Sector area of responsibility.

#### B. Commander's Intent:

(b) (7)(E) will conduct counter bandit operations within Tucson Sector in response to the increasing amount of high-risk incidents in the AOR. With this increase in manpower due to SOG attachments, (b) (7)(E) will be able to conduct effective missions in a targeted area while still maintaining the ability to flex to other parts of the Tucson Sector AOR for other threats and intelligence.

#### C. Concept of the Operation:

(b) (7)(E) will conduct a 2-phased special reconnaissance/interdiction operation in the targeted area in coordinated effort with (b) (7)(E) Station and Sector DISRUPT to interdict bandit groups and identify an organization to support investigative efforts that will dismantle the organization responsible for the bandit activity operating within Tucson Sector AOR.

Phase I (Special Reconnaissance/Interdiction Phase):

Gather intelligence on current bandit activity in the concentrated area between (b) (7)(E) area and (b) (7)(E) area. (b) (7)(E) will concentrate a combination of extended lay-in operations, shift-work, sensors, game cams, specialized low light optics and Sector DISRUPT into the current concentrated target area to identify ingress/egress routes of bandits, bandit caves/hidesites, bandit RIP locations, possible safe/stash houses, and pattern of life of scouts and drivers linked to the bandit organization.

- Due to the recent pictures of bandits on four occasions near Fresno Canyon, (b) (7)(E) will maintain teams responsible for this area to interdict the bandits while other teams are identifying (b) (7)(E) anticipating a shift from the bandits.

Phase I will be accomplished by maintaining teams near the game camera that captured a piece of the bandit groups current pattern to interdict them, while deploying additional teams to track (b) (7)(E) groups through the targeted area to identify (b) (7)(E) routes, lay-ups, guides, stash houses and load-out sites. This will allow (b) (7)(E) to identify future RIP sites when the bandits shift and identify subjects possible connected to the organization.

Phase I's Measure of Effectiveness (MOE):

- Gather intelligence on bandit egress/ingress routes, hide-sites, and RIP sites in order to allow (b) (7)(E) to anticipate the areas the bandits will operate in the future when they shift.
- Gather intelligence through tracking and observation of (b) (7)(E) groups to possible link guides, backpackers, drivers, and stash houses to an organization
- Gather intelligence from bandits (when interdicted) that will identify TTP's and support an investigation.

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) will shift to and cover different (b) (7)(E) in the (b) (7)(E) based on intelligence collected from (b) (7)(E) operations, SIU, LETC, special intelligence and the (b) (7)(E)

(b) (7)(E) will also maintain a team that will be responsible for gathering intelligence and conducting operations based on threats and intelligence in other target areas within the Tucson Sector AOR.

#### **D. Coordinating Instructions:**

##### **1. Transportation and Processing of Apprehensions: As Per SOP of AOR**

##### **2. Special Instructions for the BP Units supporting the BORTAC Operation:**

TBD

##### **3. Special Coordinations required/conducted with other agency? Not Required**

##### **4. OAM Support Requirements:**

a. POC: OAM Operations

##### **b. Type of Air Frame:**

(b) (7)(E)

c. Video Capability? Yes

d. FRIES or SPIES required? Yes

##### **e. Special Instructions:**

Specifics will vary based on the mission. Air will be coordinated on a mission by mission basis

##### **5. Additional Coordinating Instructions based on the mission:**

Mission specific

6. Have pertinent law enforcement agencies been notified? Not Required

List of contacts:

(b) (7)(E) Operations (b) (7)(C), (b) (6)  
(b) (7)(E) Operations (b) (7)(C), (b) (6)  
Sector (b) (7)(E)(b) (7)(C), (b) (6)

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE and LOGISTICS

A. Overtime Cost Expectations: TBD

B. Travel Specifics:

1. Location of Lodging:

N/A

2. Cost Estimate: \$0.00

C. Vehicle Maintenance and Logistics:

As per SOG (b) (7)(E) SOP.

D. BORSTAR Medics Assigned: Mission Specific

E. Media Concerns:

As per SOP

F. Legal Review:

As per SOP

V. COMMAND and SIGNAL

A. Chain of Command

CPA (b) (7)(C), (b) (6)  
(A) DCPA (b) (7)(C), (b) (6)  
(A) Division Chief (b) (7)(C), (b) (6)  
ACPA (b) (7)(C), (b) (6)  
Commander (b) (7)(E) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
Deputy Commander (b) (7)(E) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

B. Unit Chain of Command

1. Mission Commander: SOS (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (TACON of SOG)

2. Team Leaders

SBPA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)  
SBPA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

C. Other Agency POCs:  
TBD

D. Frequencies / Means of Communication

- 1. Primary: (b) (7)(E)
- 2. Alternate: (b) (7)(E)
- 3. Emergency: (b) (7)(E)
- 4. PMOs: (b) (7)(E)

~~EXECUTION ANNEX (INTERNAL USE ONLY)~~

A. Task Organization:

1. Teams (Include type / personnel and Coordinates):

4. TOC:

Location

B. Actions on Target:

- 1. Primary Plan
- 2. Alternate Plan
- 3. Contingency Plans:
- 4. Emergency Plans:

**a. Officer Down:**

**d. IEDs:**

**C. Order of Movement and Routes:**

**1. Location of ORP:**

**2. Locations of HLZ or Personnel Drop Off Point (PDOP):**

**3. Vehicle or Aircraft Movement Order and Load Plan:**

Team 1

Personnel

Team 2

Personnel

Team 3

Personnel

Team 4

Personnel

Team 5

Personnel

Team 6

Personnel

**D. Special Instructions for Attachments:**

**1. Supporting BP Units:**



**2. SIGINT Requirements:**

**3. Scope / MSS / GSR Support Requirements:**

**4. Supporting OA Units:**

**E. Command and Control:**

**Team Frequencies:**

**1. Assault:**

**2. PMOs:**

**3. Perimeter:**

**4. Supporting Assets:**

**5. TOC / Incident Command:**

**Brevity Codes:**

**(b) (7)(E)**

**[REDACTED]**

**[REDACTED]**